

# CORONAVIRUS Response

/ 18<sup>th</sup> Month Review



890 food parcels delivered, P3



2700 Lunch packs for the homeless, P4



Distributing food across West Yorkshire, P5



Homeless coordination support (Charter Launch), P6



4300 meals working with Gateway Church, P7



Discipleship on the margins, P8

Trust in the Lord with all your heart (Proverbs 3:5)



**Dave Paterson**

“It’s been a privilege to work with so many people, including some great volunteers over the last 18 months and in particular since Coronavirus hit the UK. A very interesting

quote I heard was on a Zoom call with the Street Support UK Network when Government Advisor John Kirby stated that those cities that have been able to respond most effectively were those that had pre-existing networks and relationships before the pandemic hit. Throughout 2019 and early 2020 we had continued to develop key areas of work including with Food Aid/Poverty networks in Leeds and West Yorkshire, launching the Leeds Homeless Charter, developing prayer in the city, as well as continuing input into Addiction and Discipleship on the Margins, which has involved support for the new Mission, Theology and Ministry on the Margins Course. On Monday 16th March 2020 many people’s worlds started to change as the Prime Minister announced major restrictions. On the 18th March we were part of a major conference call involving the Council, FareShare Yorkshire, Trussell Trust (Leeds) which aimed at starting work immediately on how Leeds could respond from a food perspective. On the 19th March, following previous conversations that had started 2 days earlier, we worked alongside Joseph Battle and his charity called ‘We Care Leeds’ to run a food parcel delivery scheme to people’s houses. This was then complemented by the Welfare Support Delivery scheme, which started on the 26th March, 3 days after Lock down was announced and involved a large central warehouse and interaction with 27 community hubs including a number of Churches. After lock down we started to work with a range of partners to provide lunch packs for the homeless community including in the hotels where people were staying whilst official food supplies were put in place and coordinated the supply of snack bags to 2 hotels working with grass root groups / charities and the Leeds Rhino’s Foundation.

In April, working in partnership with Feeding Britain, Rethink Food and Leeds Rhinos Foundation we were able to start purchasing and distributing food across West Yorkshire to help supply key food providers in Leeds, Calderdale, Wakefield and Kirklees. In addition to this work we have helped to establish night prayer times on Zoom twice a week, fed into 2 Gather Leeds meetings regarding issues of poverty and prayer and been able to communicate key bits of information out to the city of Leeds.” We give thanks to God for all his provision over this busy time.



**Mary Halsey**

“We know how important joint working and partnership among people, projects and sectors are, but this was even more evident

when lockdown hit and the city had to respond quickly to a huge rise in need, the disruption to everyday life and normal provision, and all of the uncertainty that came with it. It felt like the connections built up over the years really came into their own.

Although it was incredibly hectic in the first few weeks, I was glad to be part of the We Care Leeds referral system, supporting some of the most vulnerable people. We were also able to respond to the many queries that came in from people in need, and workers, who were unsure of where to turn.

The city’s response to the need, including from many churches, community and faith groups, has been really encouraging, but we know there is so much more to do. People are concerned about the longer-term impacts of the virus in areas like debt, mental health and homelessness, so we need to be looking at what we can learn from this time, and see how these partnerships can be widened and strengthened to deal with whatever we face in the future.”

# FOOD PARCEL DELIVERY SCHEME

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS



UPA refers on to 'We Care Leeds' in the first 8 weeks followed by referrals to Salvation Army, Life Church and Streetwise from May.

UPA staff and volunteers would deliver food parcels when dietary requirements were needed. 890 food parcels in total in 5 months



Food deliveries to vulnerable people

# COORDINATION OF LUNCH PACKS FOR THE HOMELESS



Big Change Leeds providing Finance to UPA



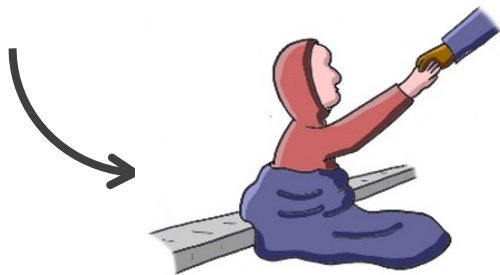
UPA through Leeds FAN and the Leeds Homeless Charter works with volunteers and Leeds City Council to source stock and deliver to



St Georges Crypt make up sandwich bags



Simon on the Streets collect sandwich bags and take to the homeless community



# COORDINATION OF FOOD DISTRIBUTION

THROUGH THE WEST YORKSHIRE FOOD POVERTY NETWORK & FEEDING BRITAIN



Feeding Britain provide finance £££

Bulk buying food from Brakes Food, His Church and Morrisons

Rethink Food Store food at their warehouse



Leeds Rhinos Foundation collect food and distribute to Food Providers in West Yorkshire



Distribution to Calderdale, Wakefield, Kirklees and Leeds (Pic from St Catherine's in Wakefield)



# PRAYER PHYSICALLY & VIRTUALLY

We have been working with the Pray for Leeds (P4L) team to mobilise prayer for those on the margins and the city of Leeds in General. In October we worked with Church Leaders to help run a gathering focused on Praying for Salvation and Transformation in Leeds. In January we ran our annual prayer lunch in partnership with Leeds Minster and enjoyed listening to Bishop Paul who talked about the need to pray for some of the poorest people in society. On the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> March we were able to do 24 hours of Prayer in partnership with St Matts. There was lots of prayer for different spheres, people on the margins and perhaps the biggest focus was that on praying for the situation regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic. Friday 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> were pretty much the last possible days this prayer gathering could have happened. It felt like Gods timing and we worked to honour the existing virus rules at that time.



Pic above - Bishop Paul talks at Minster Prayer Lunch.

**With one accord (they) devoted themselves to prayer, Acts 1:14**

## WORKING WITH GATEWAY CHURCH TO PROVIDE 3 MEALS A DAY OVER 3 DAYS



From mid April we started discussions with Gateway Church and Caring Together and Shiloh Roasters around setting up a creative food delivery scheme in Woodhouse and Little London. This



started on 6<sup>th</sup> May and ran until mid August 2020

supporting 50 individuals, many on a weekly basis. What was really good was that instead of providing food parcels we were able to provide 3 cooked meals over 3 days alongside providing Bread with ham and cheese and milk and cereal to last 3 days. This meant that vulnerable people received 3 visits over a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday allowing for door step conversations, prayer to be offered and leading to an increased sense of health and wellbeing. We as UPA worked hard to set the initiative, channelled in additional referrals and then volunteers from the Church carried out the work.

# LAUNCHING THE LEEDS HOMELESS CHARTER

In May 2019 we launched the Leeds Homeless Charter with the MP Hilary Benn and Deputy leader of Leeds City Council Debra Coupar. The charter was put together over the previous 18 months and involves a commitment to work towards set aims and objectives as well as improved good practise for Grass Root Groups going out on the street. The Charter is underpinned by 4 working groups which we at UPA help to chair. These are:

- Grass Root Groups / Charities Connecting with Commissioned Services
- Addiction and Mental Health
- Migration
- Prison Release

One of the areas we are slowly developing is connecting Grass Root Groups / Charities with people who are accommodated so they can receive support in their accommodation regarding befriending and food support. The relationships built through the Charter were very helpful when lockdown hit as we were able to enter into careful dialogue with different groups about staying off the street until the 1<sup>st</sup> August. Around half a dozen groups provided weekly snack bags for the hotels collected by the Leeds Rhinos Foundation. We are very grateful to all the groups for working with us on this and believe that because their actions this has helped to keep infection rates down amongst the homeless community.



The homeless charter launch event



Sharing lived experience of homelessness

## DISCIPLESHIP ON THE MARGINS

We continue to bring people together around the theme of Discipleship with marginalised people. One of the developments which has taken place has been Lighthouse (Church for marginalised people), partnering with the Leeds School of Theology to run the course Mission, Theology and Ministry on the Margins, which has had 50 people take part over a year. We as UPA were able to contribute to one of the sessions on the theme of working together and effective signposting. We are fully supportive of this new course which starts again in September 2020, which runs to June 2021. If you're interested, please get in touch.



## FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Since March 2020 we have been helping to distribute food across the city. We would often get calls from businesses and stores offering donations and would either connect them with existing food providers or collect and deliver using our brilliant volunteers. We want to thank Fareshare Yorkshire, Rethink Food, St Georges Crypt, the two large Trussell Trust Foodbanks who have all given food to other organisations and to the Leeds Rhinos Foundation for all their deliveries during the Pandemic Period.

Pic: Volunteer Graham Collins



## DONATIONS AND CONTACT INFO

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**As the full effects of the Pandemic set in our work will constantly be needed as Leeds and the UK seeks to recover. If people want to donate financially then they can do through bank transfer by emailing us for the bank details. You can also donate by Cash or by making a cheque payable to Leeds Christian Community Trust (LCCT) and address the envelope to Unity in Poverty Action (UPA), St Michaels Hall, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 3HN.**

**For you (God) have been a stronghold for the poor, (Isaiah 25:4)**